

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-20 (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) A shoe comprising:

a shell;

a sole assembly; and,

a heel protector permanently secured to the shell, wherein the heel protector includes;

a semi-rigid middle portion, wherein the middle portion wherein the middle portion includes at least one horizontal ridge integrally formed in the middle portion and substantially covers a rear heel portion of the shell and is permanently attached to the shoe;

a first side portion integrally formed with the middle portion, wherein the first side portion partially covers a first side of the shell; [and]

a second side portion integrally formed with the middle portion, wherein the second side portion partially covers a second side of the shell[.] ; and,

a bottom edge, wherein the bottom edge of the protector is secured to a welt in the shoe, wherein the bottom edge of the protector is stitched to the welt.

22. ( Previously Presented) The shoe of claim 21, wherein the first side portion further comprises a first aperture and the second side portion further comprises a second aperture, wherein the first aperture aligns with a first eyelet on a front of the shell and the second aperture aligns with a second eyelet on the front of the shell.

23. (Previously Presented) The shoe of claim 22, wherein a shoelace is laced through the first aperture and the first eyelet, and the second aperture and the second eyelet.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Canceled)

26. (Canceled)

27. (Canceled )

28. (Currently Amended) A shoe comprising:

a heel protector including;

a semi-rigid middle portion, wherein the middle portion which substantially covers a rear heel portion of a shell [and] is permanently attached to the shell along a bottom edge of the middle portion and includes at least one horizontal ridge integrally formed in the middle portion;

a first side portion integrally formed with the middle portion having at least one aperture formed therein, wherein the first side portion partially covers a first side of the shell;

a second side portion integrally formed with the middle portion having at least one aperture formed therein, wherein the second side portion partially covers a second side of the shell; and;

wherein the at least one aperture formed in the first side portion and the at least one aperture formed in the second side portion each align with a corresponding eyelet on a front of the shell and the bottom edge of the protector is stitched to a welt in the shoe.

29. (Previously Presented) The shoe of claim 28, wherein a shoelace is laced through the at least one aperture formed in the first side portion and the corresponding eyelet, and the at least one aperture formed in the second side portion and the corresponding eyelet.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Canceled)

32. (Canceled)

33. (Canceled )

34. (Currently Amended ) A shoe comprising:

a shell;

a sole assembly; and,

a heel protector including;

a semi-rigid middle portion having at least one horizontal ridge integrally formed in the middle portion , wherein the middle portion substantially covers rear heel portion

of the shell and a bottom edge of the middle portion is [secured] stitched to a welt between the shell and sole;

    a first side portion integrally formed with the middle portion, wherein the first side portion partially covers a first side of the shell;

    a second side portion integrally formed with the middle portion, wherein the second side portion partially covers a second side of the shell.